

Swastikas drawn in bathrooms

DHS principal issues
announcement
condemning actions

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DUXBURY — School officials continue to work to identify suspects after swastikas were drawn in some of the bathrooms at Duxbury High School last week.

Duxbury High School Principal Andrew Stephens issued a ConnectEd message to Duxbury homes Thursday and distributed copies of an announcement to each student with instructions to bring it home.

"We are working to determine the culprit and have limited the number of bathrooms available for student use until further notice," he said via the ConnectEd message. "Additionally, I have made an announcement to the students and faculty that outlines the issue, the historical significance of this symbol, the consequences for these acts and what this means to us as a school community."

Superintendent Ben Tantillo could not be reached for comment by press time on continued efforts to identify a suspect or suspects. Stephens referred questions to the superintendent.

In his announcement, Stephens said school officials are outraged to find such symbols at the school based on the significance of such action.

"Symbols have tremendous meaning in our lives," he wrote. "Symbols often rep-

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'An outrage to every one of us'

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resent complicated and deeply held beliefs and values. The swastika, as it applies to contemporary society, represents the values and beliefs of a group of people that deeply believed that one race was superior to all other races and ethnic groups and used that reasoning as a basis for the starting of World War II — and the planned eradication of over 6 million Jews, gypsies, homosexuals and political dissidents — in other words, people who were different than the dominant group that used the swastika as the symbol to reflect its philosophy.

"The federal government agrees with the above interpretation of what the swastika represents," he continued. "In addition to significant school-based consequences, the putting of swastikas on any public or private property falls under federal legislation as a hate crime. The police have been notified, and, if caught, the person or persons who did this could face prosecution for a hate crime for which the penalties are severe."

More importantly, to have a symbol that represents such intolerance and hatred for racial, ethnic and religious difference written on the walls of our school outrages us as human beings. As members of a community that is made up of many different peoples, it is my hope that you, too, are outraged at such an act, because this is an insult to every one of us in this community. It is our belief that we have the responsibility as human beings to act when we see or know about such behavior. This is not to say that you take matters into your own hands. It means that in no way should you acknowledge such people through laughter or praise, and it means that if you know who did this, you would take responsibility and tell someone in this building. My hope is that this gets you to think about what you and our school should stand for."

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